

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6789

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBSSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBSSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 3166

LIMDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IX, XF

SUBJECT: ISRAELI OFFICIAL ON CURRENT ME DEVELOPMENTS

1. WE HAD OPPORTUNITY MAY 21 TO GET READING ON ISRAELI THINKING ABOUT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MIDDLE EAST FROM MFA'S ME DEPT HEAD, Yael VERED.

2. SOVIET ROLE- VERED' REACTION TO REPORTS FROM VIENNA THAT SOVIETS HAD AGREED NOT TO STAND IN WAY OF FURTHER EFFORT TO WORK OUT INTERIM SETTLEMENT BETWEEN ISREL AD EGYPT WAS THAT IT SHOWED SOVIETS WER NOT FEELING UNDER PRESSURE IN PURSUIT OF THEIR BASIC ME OBJECTIVES, I.E. EXTENDING THER INFLUENCE WHILE PROGRESSIVELY LIMITING THAT OF THE US. WHILE DISTRUSTFUL OF SOVIET MOTIVES, VERED BELIEVED THAT RESULTS OF SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH GROMYKO WOULD RELIEVE PRESSURE IN REGION (THIS WAS BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SYRIAN UNDOF RENEWAL) AND DANGE OF WAR.

3. SYRIA-IRAQ- VERED'S ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT TENSIONS BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ ARE THAT THEY REPRESENT

A DELIBERATE MOVE ON SYRIA'S PART TO, 1) FORCEFULLY REMIND IRAQ THAT SYRIA WILL NOT TOLERATE FURTHER IRAQI INTERFERENCE IN SYRIA'S INTERNAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AND 2) EXPRESS GENUINE UNHAPPINESS WITH EXISTING WATER CONTROL AGREEMENT. VERED COMMENTED THAT SHE HAD BEEN EXPECTING SOME SUCH SYRIAN MOVE EVER SINCE THE 1973 WAR, THOUGH SHE HAD THOUGHT IT WOULD COME EARLIER. IT WAS INEVITABLE, SHE SAID THAT THE "EGGS" FERTILIZED BY THE IRAQIS DURING THEIR PROTRACTED STAY IN SYRIA DURING AND FOLLOWING THE YOM KIPPUR WAR WOULD ULTIMATELY "HATCH". SYRIA, SHE THOUGHT WAS GIVING IRAQ A VERY CLEAR WARNING THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED AGAIN. FOR THE REST, SHE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ONE SHOULD ATTACH TOO MUCH SIGNIFICANCE TO THE MOVEMENT OF SYRIAN ARMOR TO THE AREA. SHE THOUGHT THERE WAS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF HOSTILITIES OF ANY KIND, BUT THAT THE SYRIANS, KNOWING HOW IRRATIONAL THE IRAQIS COULD BE (SHE SAID) WERE TAKING OUT SOME MILITARY INSURANCE.

4. SYRIA-JORDAN-REVIEWING GROUND COVERED BY CHARGE IN RECENT MEETING WITH MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL EVRON, WE NOTED THAT REPORTS FROM DAMASCUS TENDED TO CONFIRM VIEW THAT THERE WAS NO SUBSTANCE TO REPORTS THAT SYRIA AND JORDAN HAD CONCLUDED MILITARY COOPERATION AGREEMENTS. WE AGAIN REVIEWED REASONING CONTAINED IN EMBASSY AMMAN MESSAGE AS TO WHY JORDANIANS WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ENTER INTO ANY SUCH ARRANGEMENT. VERED'S REACTION TO THIS WAS AS FOLLOWS: IT MIGHT BE TRUE THAT NO FORMAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA. HOWEVER, HUSSEIN WAS BASICALLY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING HIS SYRIAN CONNECTIONS BECAUSE HE WANTED TO GET BACK INTO THE NEGOTIATING AREA AGAIN AND SYRIANS COULD INFLUENCE PLO. WHETHER OR NOT HUSSEIN HAD ACTUALLY CONCLUDED ANY AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT WEST BANKERS AND HIS OWN PEOPLE IN JORDAN THOUGHT HE HAD. SO DID JORDANIAN ARMY, SHE SAID. THIS BEING TRUE, CONFIDENTIAL

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HUSSEIN HAD A FORM OF COMMITMENT TO SYRIAN WHETHER OR NOT HE HAD INTENDED TO. NEXT, SHE SAID, ONE HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT RECENT JORDANIAN TROOP REALIGNMENT. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THEY COULD BE DEFENSIVE IN NATURE- JORDAN DID NOT EXPECT ISRAEL TO ATTACK HER IN THE NEAR FUTURE AFTER ALL THEY NEVERTHELESS PUT JORDAN IN A POSITION TO ASSIST EGYPT AND SYRIA MILITARILY IN EVENT OF OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES. IN FACT, VERED SAID SHE WAS PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT JORDANIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS MEANT THAT JORDAN WAS NOW COMMITTED TO PARTICIPATE IN PLANNING OF ANY FUTURE COMBINED ARAB OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL. THIS WAS IN CONTRAST TO SITUATION BEFORE THE YOM KIPPUR WAR.

5. LEBANON- VERED SIAD GOI IS WORRIED ABOUT CURRENT LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED VERY GRAVE. A PLO VICTORY OF SOME KIND COULD INTRODUCE A DANGEROUS INSTABILITY INTO AREA. ISRAELIS BELIEVED THAT SYRIA COULD EASILY BRING SITUATION UNDER CONTRL BY MAKING THEIR DESIRES CLEAR TO THOSE PLO ELEMENTS WHICH RELY ON SYRIA'S SUPPORT.

6. PLO- VERED SAID SHE SHARED ASSESSMENT OF MANY OBSERVERS THAT RECENT ARAFAT VISIT TO MOSCOW WAS NOT FULL SUCCESS FOR EITHER PARTY. SHE BELIEVES PLO HAS DECIDED AGAINST ANY CHANGES IN " RECOGNITION" POLICY AND IS THEREFORE PREPARED TO PLAY NO ROLE AT GENEVA.

7. COMMENTING ON RECENT INCREASE IN TERRORIST INCIDENTS VERED SAID THAT PLO HAD NOT IMPROVED ITS POSITION IN WEST BANK IN RECENT MONTHS. MONITORING OF PLO BROADCASTS AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE HAD SHOWN THAT PLO HAD BEEN DETERMINED TO TRY TO SHOW UPSWING IN ANTI-ISRAELI ACTION AT TIME OF (MAY 15) SECULAR ANNIVERSARY USED ALL MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL, INCLUDING INADEQUATELY TRAINED YOUNG PEOPLE. RESULT HAD NOT IMPRESSED ISRAELIS, BUT HAD PERMITTED THEM TO ROUND UP A FAIR NUMBER OF TROUBLE MAKERS. VERED SHOWED NO SPECIAL CONCERN ABOUT GOI'S CONTINUED ABILITY TO HANDLE ANY PROBLEMS PLO MIGHT ATTEMPT TO CREATE IN WEST BANK. SHE DID NOT BELIEVE PLO COULD SUSTAIN AN ACTIVE PROGRAM.
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VELIOTES

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